

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) sent a bipartisan letter to President Bush today asking him to release \$200 million in Low Income Home Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP) contingency funds needed to address additional energy-related needs resulting from the recent cold wave throughout New York.

“Hard-working families who struggle to make ends meet have been hit hard by frigid temperatures this winter,” Arcuri said. “Living on already strained budgets, they simply can’t afford to buy food, gas, and heat. Increased resources for LIHEAP will help these families and senior citizens who suffer when they are forced to turn down the thermostat. My colleagues and I have asked the President to work with us to make sure that vulnerable members of our community aren’t left out in the cold.”

In 2005-2006, 60,272 households in the 24th district benefited from the Home Heating Assistance Program, with over 30,000 households receiving assistance on an emergency basis.

Due to the recent spell of cold weather, several states across the country are currently faced with insufficient funding for home heating assistance programs. These states have few or no funds remaining to address crises conditions and the situation is expected to get worse as winter progresses.

The President has the authority to immediately release \$200 million from the LIHEAP emergency contingency fund to help these states provide home heating and energy assistance.

The letter to President Bush was led by Arcuri and Northeast-Midwest Congressional Coalition co-chairs Representatives Martin Meehan (D-MA) and Steven LaTourette (R-OH), as well as Representative Sam Graves (R-MO). Including Arcuri, 51 Representatives signed the letter to the President.

The Letter to President Bush is attached below:

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We urge you to immediately release \$200 million which is available in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) emergency contingency fund.

The release of LIHEAP contingency funds is needed to help states meet additional energy-related needs resulting from the extended arctic cold wave which has covered much of the nation during the past several days, causing temperatures in some regions to dip to forty-two degrees below zero. At least nine deaths spread over five states have been attributed to the surge of cold weather.

Between FY 2005 and FY 2006 the number of households receiving heating assistance increased from 5.1 million to 5.7 million. Preliminary reports from state officials suggest that the number of households applying for energy assistance for FY 2007 is likely to remain at FY 2006 levels. However, as a result of the recent surge of cold weather, several states across the Union are already running out of funds. These states have few or no funds remaining to address crises conditions and the situation is expected to get considerably worse in the next few weeks.

No family in our nation should be forced to choose between heating their home and putting food on the table for their children. No senior citizen should have to decide between buying life-saving prescriptions or paying utility bills. We urge you to immediately release the remaining balance of funds in the LIHEAP contingency fund.

Respectfully,

Rep. Martin Meehan

Rep. Steven LaTourette

Rep. Michael Arcuri

Rep. Sam Graves

Rep. Mike Castle
Rep. Betty Sutton
Rep. Edward Markey
Rep. Sander Levin
Rep. Mike Rogers
Rep. Maurice Hinchey
Rep. Chris Smith
Rep. William Delahunt
Rep. Richard Neal
Rep. Bobby Rush
Rep. Julia Carson
Rep. Dennis Moore
Rep. Tammy Baldwin
Rep. John Olver
Rep. James McGovern
Rep. Brian Higgins
Rep. John Dingell
Rep. James Langevin
Rep. Steve Kagen
Rep. Michael Michaud
Rep. Peter Welch
Rep. Jerry Nadler
Rep. Leonard Boswell
Rep. Collin Peterson
Rep. Patrick Kennedy
Rep. Tim Murphy
Rep. Rosa DeLauro
Rep. Bart Stupak
Rep. Gary Ackerman
Rep. John McHugh
Rep. Jose Serrano
Rep. Janice Schakowsky
Rep. Patrick Murphy
Rep. Earl Blumenauer
Rep. Joseph Crowley
Rep. Dennis Kucinich
Rep. Peter Visclosky
Rep. James Oberstar
Rep. Emanuel Cleaver
Rep. Tom Allen
Rep. Steve Israel
Rep. Todd Platts
Rep. Joe Sestak
Rep. Paul Hodes
Rep. Joe Courtney
Rep. Phil Hare

Rep. Keith Ellison

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